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SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION
FRIDAY, JUNE 5, 2009

In Today's Papers

A Call for A New Beginning (Milliyet)
Media draw attention to U.S. President Barack Obama's historic speech from Cairo, and emphasize his positive messages to the Islamic world. Mainstream Haberturk headlines, "From (Bush's) Crusade Campaign to (Obama's) 'Selamunaleykum,'" and notes, "President Obama attempted to repair the bridges that were burned during the Bush administration's War on Terror." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports, "Obama began his speech with 'Selamunaleykum' and he quoted the Koran several times throughout his speech." Mainstream Milliyet reports in "A Call for A New Beginning," that "Obama addressed 1.5 billion Muslims and he said what Muslims wanted to hear on every topic," and thus the paper calls the speech, "a turning point." Mainstream Vatan notes, "Even Hamas militants in Gaza listened with all their hearts and souls to Obama's comments on Israel and Palestine." Islamist-oriented Zaman headlines, "Obama Made A Call for A New Beginning with The Islamic World," and the paper says, "Obama is trying to wipe the Bush administration's slate with Muslims clean." Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak headlines, "He Spoke Verses of the Koran," and the paper reports, "Obama has made his long-awaited speech," and "Obama emphasized the important role of Turkey's leadership," and Obama also noted, "the road to peace in the Middle East passes through the two-state solution."

Several newspapers noted Obama's emphasis on the importance of not denying women the right to education based on the way they dress. Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet notes Obama "gave support to the headscarf," and, "Obama emphasized that women should not be prevented from the right to education based on what they wear," but the secularist paper stopped short of criticizing him for this statement. Haberturk did criticize him in the headline, "In Ankara He's Secularist, In Egypt He's A Headscarf Supporter," and notes, Obama said, "When I was in Ankara I said the U.S. is not at war with Islam," but the paper says "he gave a headscarf message by saying 'Those who cover their heads should not be denied the right to education.'" Far right Tercuman says, "Obama demands support for the freedom of the headscarf." Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak points out "Obama addressed the issue of inequality between men and women"

and also "Obama pointed out that women who wear headscarves in the U.S. are protected by the law."

Turkish Leaders' Reactions to the Speech

Media outlets note that Turkish leaders 'applauded' Obama's speech. Mainstream Sabah reports that President Gul said "With his remarks and promises today, Obama showed once again that he is a constructive leader and that partnership for peace and stability is possible with Islamic countries. I found his speech sincere, honest and realistic. I believe that his messages were very open and clear." Prime Minister Erdogan said that he listened to some parts of Obama's speech and noted that he "shares the expressed views in these parts." Islamist-oriented Zaman reports that Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said "Obama's speech in Cairo was a kind of a follow up to his speech in the Turkish Parliament. We agree with the messages he gave in principal however, the international public, including the US, should take more active initiatives regarding the issues on the agenda, especially regarding the problems in the Middle East."

Commentary on TVs React to the Speech

Kerim Balci, Ankara representative for Today's Zaman, told NTV: "American politics are going through a 'paradigm shift' as President Obama said 'We should quit living in the past, and look at the future.'" Balci also noted, "Obama didn't put forth anything tangible regarding the Israel-Palestine question. He offered no concrete solution on the Middle East as well. Obama also said he appreciated Turkey's role as the leader of the Alliance of Civilizations project. Now it's important to see which way the people and intellectuals in Turkey will view Obama's speech." NTV

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pointed to the fact that President Obama quoted the Quran three times. Mustafa Cagrici, the Mufti of Istanbul who served as President Obama's guide during his mosque visits in Istanbul, called in to NTV and said, "I think it's a first in history that a western statesman delivered a speech which wandered deep into Islamic references --- a religious tone dominated President Obama's speech. Islam is not a religion that endorses violence, it mainly directs people to know and to love each other. He began his speech with the Muslim way of salutation, which indicates that this faith preaches peace between and for human beings. Obama also cited a verse in the Quran, which was repeated in a hadith of the Prophet Muhammad that 'You cannot be true believers unless you want for others what you want for yourself.' I wish President Obama would deliver a speech at the Israeli parliament as well, and touch on the problems of the Israeli politics and their religion." Hurriyet columnist Ferai Tinc called in to Kanal 24 TV and said, "An American president, for the first time, spoke openly and directly toward both the Israelis and the Palestinians. Obama spoke openly against the Israeli settlement policy, and stressed the sufferings of Palestinians must end. He gave the message that the US was on a 'fair and just' position regarding the Middle East. In his speech, Obama gave the picture of an 'intermediator' who stands at an equal distance to both sides." Hurriyet webpage noted immediately following his speech, "President Barack Obama sought a 'new beginning' between the United States and the Muslim world in a historic speech on Thursday, and urged all sides to make compromises to end the Palestinian-Israeli conflict." Palestinian lawmaker Mustafa Barghouty called into NTV and said, "President Obama's speech was very important; it met our expectations to an extent. Obama made important evaluations, and he objected to the Israeli settlement policy. He talked about the sufferings of Palestinian people and said Palestinians must have an independent state. He also said the majority of Palestinian people supported Hamas, and that the issue must be resolved by Palestinians themselves. It remains to be seen whether Obama will be able to put pressure on Israel. Overall, President Obama's speech was very positive, one which had not been seen coming from a US President before. Now we expect President Obama to put pressure on Israel, otherwise, reaching peace will be impossible."

Editorial Commentary on President Obama's Cairo Speech

Cengiz Candar comments in liberal Radikal (6/5): "One of the most striking parts of President Obama's Cairo speech was when he stressed 'democracy,' and he criticized the regimes, including

Egypt, which have a serious 'democracy defect.' Leaving aside the political aspects of the U.S. President's speech, its most striking parts were the claim of 'global civilization' stemming from 'modesty,' and in this context, the indispensable place of Islam and the Muslims. What else could make Obama's speech more important, and perhaps, 'historic'? President Barack Hussein Obama continues to be a 'chance' for the world."

Yasemin Congar comments in leftist Taraf (6/5): "Several groups will have a hard time when a man who understands globalism so well, and is ready to meet the requirements of a 'brave new world,' sits at the White House. For instance, the radicals who see anti-Semitism a profession will have a harder time today than they did during the Bush era, just as the Christian radicals who are anti-Islam and the Zionist hawks. Likewise, tough days await the 'secularist' circles who are persistent in not allowing girls who cover their heads into the universities in Turkey. Because they are now facing a man who says 'A woman who covers her head is no less equal than a woman who does not,' as well as 'We must not order women how to dress. I respect those women who choose to live their lives in traditional roles, but it should be their choice.' And this man says 'No system of government can or should be imposed by one nation by any other. But I will support everywhere people's will to determine how they are governed,' and concludes by saying, 'These are not just American ideas; they are human rights.' In the 'brave new world' U.S. President Barack Hussein Obama talks about, the enemies of democracy

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will have a hard time."

Hasan Cemal observes in mainstream Milliyet (6/5): "President Obama said the U.S. would not be in competition with the Muslim world, and would not fight against Islam in any way. He also stressed 'looking at the future,' saying a beautiful future cannot be built if the past takes us hostage. President Obama made a good kicked off to a good start in Cairo yesterday, and I hope it will continue."

Gungor Mengi writes in mainstream Vatan (6/5): "In Cairo yesterday, President Obama said, 'I reject the views of some in the West that a woman who chooses to cover her hair is somehow less equal, but I do believe that a woman who is denied an education is denied equality.' It's not difficult to guess that the 'headscarf lobby' will jump on these words. Obama paid his first visit to Turkey, a NATO member, Muslim country run by a secular democracy. It's unthinkable that Obama did not know the debates on covering women's head has a determinative effect in politics. Even if our world had been a confederation, and Obama the head of that confederation, he shouldn't have uttered his view as if he were issuing a fatwa. During his visit to Ankara, could Obama have taken advice from our politicians that the one material that would bring the maximum profit across the Muslim world was the exploitation of headscarf?"

Ferai Tinc writes in mainstream Hurriyet (6/5): "In his speech in Ankara, President Obama did not show Turkey as a model for the Islamic world; he just gave an example that the U.S. could cooperate with Turkey. In Ankara, Obama gave the message that if the U.S. can be friends with a Muslim majority country such as Turkey, it can be allies with the entire Islamic world. In his Cairo speech, Obama addressed directly the Islamic world via an initiative the U.S. President made with his own voice."

Ihsan Dagi writes in Islamist-oriented Zaman (6/5): "President Obama, even when speaking in a country like Egypt which its regime is not compatible with democracy, stressed that he was on the side of governments which reflect the will of people. In this context, we must see the central and significant position of Turkey between Islam and the West. Being able to carry Turkey to the center of global politics, however, requires the solution of Turkey's internal problems. A Turkey which shows that it lives together in diversity and in peace and democracy can contribute to the harmony between Islam and the West."

Fehmi Koru observes in Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak (6/5): "President Obama made exciting remarks which we are not used to hearing from a politician at his level. Obama enhanced the opinion

that his term as president will be different from the previous American administrations. If he makes serious efforts in the direction of the values he defended yesterday, the Muslim world will not delay a positive response, which he expects. The Muslim world should not delay in giving President Obama that positive response."

Foreign Minister Davutoglu to Visit Pakistan and Afghanistan
Islamist-oriented Zaman and liberal-intellectual Radikal report that FM Davutoglu will visit Pakistan on June 8-9 and Afghanistan on June 10-11. Davutoglu told the reporters that he was going to these countries as the Foreign Minister of a country "closely interested in the future of these two states" and as "term president of the UN Security Council." Davutoglu noted that Turkey is ready to extend every necessary support to reduce the sufferings in these countries.

New Detentions in Ergenekon Case
Cumhuriyet, Radikal, Milliyet, Sabah, Hurriyet, Zaman and others: Today's papers report that under the 13th wave of the Ergenekon probe, police detained 20 people in Ankara, Istanbul and Izmir. Mainstream Sabah reports that 16 of the 20 people were military

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personnel who had ties with retired Major Levent Pektas who was earlier arrested in Poyrazkoy operation. Three women civil servants from Gulhane Military Medical Academy in Ankara were also detained within the scope of Ergenekon probe.

Ecevit Era Ends in DSP
Zaman, Yeni Safak, Radikal, Vatan and others, CNN Turk: Rahsan Ecevit, wife of late premier Bulent Ecevit and founder of Democratic Left Party (DSP), resigned from her party by saying "there is no longer any loyalty to Ecevit's principles in the party." Deputies Emrehan Halici, Mucahit Pehlivan and Recai Birgun also resigned from the party following Ecevit's resignation.

TV News (CNN Turk)

Domestic

- One soldier died and three others injured at a mine explosion in Bestler-Dereler region of Sirnak. Following this, the suspected PKK positions in the Bestler-Dereler region were bombed by Cobra helicopters.

- Ergenekon suspect Prof.Erol Manisali was discharged from jail following cancer surgery.

- 40 migrants were rescued by coastal security forces after their boat sank off Izmir.

- The General Staff rejects reports about search in the Naval Forces Command yesterday, and says that yesterday a major and a non-commissioned officer were the only regular officers taken into custody in connection with Ergenekon investigation.

World

- EU Commissioner Olli Rehn says Turkey needs to accelerate reforms.

- Brazilian Air Force recovered the first wreckage from Air France Flight 447 about 340 miles northeast of Brazil's northern Fernando de Noronha islands.

- Romania's small military contingent ends its deployment in Iraq.

- President Sargsian of Armenia and Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan meet in St. Petersburg.

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